

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 PM-03 INR-07 IO-10 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 DPW-01 PRS-01 OMB-01

SS-15 SSO-00 INRE-00 /070 W

----- 091337

O R 081130Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1687

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USIA WASHDC

USDEL JEC PARIS UNN

CIA

DIA

JCS

JUSMAAG

WHITE HOUSE

USAJFKCMA/ATCS-WL-DSA

CINCPAC

CINCPACAF

CINCPACFLT

DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG UDORN

USDAO/SAIGON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 0242

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PFOR ECON VS
SUBJ: EMBASSY SAIGON'S MISSION WEEKLY FOR
JANUARY 3-8, 1975

DEPARTMENT PASS IMMEDIATE IBS/NCS

WEEKA ITEMS

--THE CEASEFIRE

--NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REACTS TO COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE

--EXTREME OPPOSITION ATTACKS GOVERNMENT ON PHUOC LONG LOSS

--SAIGON MOURNS OVERRUN PHUOC LONG

--VISIT OF SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT

--GVN DIPLOMATIC REACTION TO LOSS OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE

--BAC TO CUT SHORT AFRICAN TOUR

--BANK CREDIT MEASURES EXPECTED

--"ONE DOOR" INVESTMENT SERVICE

--ASSEMBLY COMPLETES 1975 BUDGET ACTION

--PRICES EDGE UP

--GOLD, BLACK MARKET DOLLARS DIP

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I. INTERNAL

A. THE CEASEFIRE

THE FOCUS OF FIGHTING THIS WEEK CENTERED IN MR-3,
WHERE THE PHUOC LONG PROVINCE CAPITAL FINALLY FELL JAN 6
AFTER ALMOST FOUR WEEKS UNDER SUSTAINED ASSAULT, DURING

WHICH IT RECEIVED HEAVY TANK, ARTILLERY AND GROUND ATTACKS. THE FIERCE NVA/VC ONSLAUGHT ALSO GAINED THEM THE RVNAF OUTPOST ON THE NUI BA DEN MOUNTAIN IN TAY NINH, BUT GVN FORCES WERE HOLDING WELL UNDER INTENSE COMMUNIST PRESSURE IN THE HOAI DUC AREA OF BINH TUY.

THE INCIDENT AND GVN CASUALTY LEVELS COUNTRYWIDE WERE COMPARABLE TO A WEEK AGO, BUT NVA/VC KIA WERE SHARPLY HIGHER. THE RAIN KEPT MILITARY ACTIVITY AT A LOW LEVEL IN MR-1, WHILE THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN MR-2 WITH RVNAF FORCES EXTENDING THEIR COMMANDING POSITION IN HEAVY AND LAO VALLEY FIGHTING. DOWN IN THE DELTA THE FIGHTING LEVEL FOR THE THIRD WEEK RUNNING DECLINED SOMEWHAT.

B. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REACTS TO COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE

THE UPPER HOUSE OF JAN 4 DEBATED THE CURRENT COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE AND DISCUSSED A DRAFT DECLARATION CONDEMNING COMMUNIST AGGRESSION. SENATOR NGUYEN VAN NGUU, CHAIRMAN OF SENATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, REFERRING TO GVN LOSS OF A NUMBER OF SUB-SECTORS SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, RECOMMENDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT 1) MODERNIZE ARVN COMBAT TECHNIQUES AND 2) ELIMINATE CORRUPT AND INCOMPETENT ELEMENTS FROM COMMAND POSITIONS.

AT CONCLUSION OF DEBATE SENATE ADOPTED PROPOSAL THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT ISSUE DECLARATION DENOUNCING COMMUNIST SUBVERSION OF PARIS AGREEMENT. THREE POINT DECLARATION, ISSUED AFTERNOON OF JAN 4 AND BEARING SIGNATURES OF SENATOR TRAN VAN LAM, CHAIRMAN OF SENATE AND DEPUTY NGUYEN BA CAN, LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER, DENOUNCES COMMUNIST ACTS OF SABOTAGE AGAINST THE PARIS AGREEMENT; APPEALS TO THE UNITED NATIONS, THE SIGNATORIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACT OF MARCH 2, 1973, AND THE ICCS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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COMPEL THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS TO HALT PROMPTLY ALL ACTS OF INVASION AND SUBVERSION OF THE PEACE AND TO COMPEL THEM TO ACCEPT THE RVN PROPOSAL TO EVACUATE CIVILIAN POPULATION FROM SONG BE; REQUESTS ACTIVE SUPPORT OF ARVN'S VALIANT MISSION TO DEFEND SVN AND RESTORE PEACE.

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O R 081130Z JAN 75

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C. EXTREME OPPOSITION ATTACKS GOVERNMENT ON PHUOC LONG LOSS

A SMALL GROUP OF OPPOSITION POLITICIANS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEIZED ON THE MILITARY SITUATION TO SAVAGELY ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT. THESE INCLUDED OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S SOCIETY BLOC (PSB) DEPUTIES AND SENATOR UKKVWDADAU. THEY CLAIMED THE DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION PROVES PRESIDENT THIEU'S INCOMPETENCE, PARTICULARLY AS A MILITARY LEADER. COMPLAINING THAT THE OPPOSITION HAD BEEN KEPT IN THE DARK ABOUT MILITARY CONDITIONS, PSB LEADER TRAN VAN TUYEN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HIS BLOC COULD NOT EVEN TELL WHETHER INTENSIFIED COMMUNIST ATTACKS WERE AIMED AT TEARING UP THE PARIS AGREEMENT OR AT IMPLEMENTING SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS. TUYEN ADDED THE PSB WANTS THE GOVERNMENT TO BRIEF THE LOWER HOUSE ON PHUOC LONG SO THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ADOPT A "CORRECT AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE". ANOTHER PSB SPOKESMAN IS REPORTED IN THE PRESS AS LAYING THE BLAME FOR PHUOC LONG ON THE FAILURE TO SCRUPULOUSLY IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT. OPPOSITION SONG THAN SPECULATED THAT MILITARY REVERSALS MAY BE USED BY GOVERNMENT AS EXCUSE FOR A HARSH CRACKDOWN ON POLITICAL DISSIDENCE IN SAIGON.

(COMMENT: SUCH ATTACKS LIMITED TO EXTREME OPPOSITIONISTS SUCH AS MAU AND PSB LEADERS. MASS OF THE MORE RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION IN BOTH THE SENATE AND LOWER HOUSE HAVE CONDEMNED COMMUNISTS AND AVOIDED CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT.

D. SAIGON MOURNS OVERRUN PHUOC LONG

IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL BY THE PRESIDENT, THE SAIGON PREFECTURE JAN 7 ASKED SAIGON'S CITIZENS NOT TO INDULGE IN
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ANY ENTERTAINMENT FOR THREE DAYS: JAN 8-10. ALL THEATRES, OPERA HOUSES, NIGHT CLUBS, "AND ALL OTHER FORMS OF DISTRACTION" WILL BE CLOSED DURING THE SAME PERIOD. THE PREFECTURE, IN AN ANNOUNCEMENT SIGNED BY THE MAYOR OF SAIGON, CALLED ON THE CITIZENS TO "ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORT" THESE MEASURES AS A SIGN OF SUPPORT FOR THE MEN NOW FIGHTING AND TO "SHARE THE HARDSHIPS ENDURED BY OUR COMPATRIOTS OF PHUOC LONG NOW UNDER THE COMMUNIST AGGRESSORS' YOKE."

E. VISIT OF SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT

SENATOR AND MRS STROM THURMOND (R-S.C.) , SENATOR AND MRS WILLIAM L SCOTT (R-VA), AND MR EDWARD KENNEY, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, VISITED SAIGON JAN 2-4 AS PART OF AN EIGHT-NATION SWING THROUGH THE FAR EAST. THE HIGH POINT OF THE VISIT WAS PRESIDENT THIEU'S AWARDING TO SENATOR THURMOND A GVN DECORATION IN RECOGNITION OF HIS CONSISTENT SUPPORT OF SOUTH VIETNAM OVER THE YEARS. THE CODEL'S PROGRAM ALSO INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND SENATE CHAIRMAN TRAN VAN LAM, MILITARY BRIEFINGS AT JGS HEADQUARTERS BY JGS CHIEF GENERAL CAO VAN VIEN, AND A VISIT TO MR-3 HEADQUARTERS FOR A REVIEW OF THE MILITARY SITUATION BY CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL DONG.

II. EXTERNAL

A. GVN DIPLOMATIC REACTION TO LOSS OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE

THE GVN DIPLOMATIC REACTION TO THE OFFENSIVE IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE AND ITS OFFICIAL LOSS ON JAN 7 STRESSED THE THEMES OF CONDEMNATION OF THE COMMUNISTS FOR VIOLATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, CONTINUED GVN SUPPORT FOR THE AGREEMENT, WARNINGS THAT THE GVN WOULD TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES IN SELF-DEFENSE, CALLS FOR THE COMMUNISTS TO RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS AND SAIGON, AND APPEALS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FROM GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS.

THE GVN JAN 2 SENT A NOTE TO THE PARTIES TO THE ACT OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE PROTESTING THE SEIZURE OF FIVE DISTRICT TOWNS AND ONE

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OPERATIONS BASE. THE NEXT DAY THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS CALLED TOGETHER TO HEAR A GOVERNMENT DECLARATION ON THE COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE IN PHUOC LONG ISSUED BY ACTING FOREIGN

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SS-15 SSO-00 INRE-00 /070 W

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O R 081130Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1689

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

MINISTER NGO KHAC TINH. ANOTHER NOTE OF JAN 4 TRANSMUTTED THIS DECLARATION TO THE PARTIES TO THE ACT OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE, AND A FURTHER SUCH NOTE WAS SENT JAN 6 CONCERNING THE FALL OF THE LAST DISTRICT CAPITAL IN PHUOC LONG (I.E., THE LAST TOWN OUTSIDE THE PROVINCE CAPITAL). ON JANUARY 8 THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS AGAIN CALLED TOGETHER TO HEAR A DECLARATION BY MINISTER TINH ON THE FALL OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE CAPITAL, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE WAR VICTIMS FROM INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES.

IN FURTHER ACTIONS THE GVN ON JANUARY 6 INSTRUCTED ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA TO REQUEST THE ICRC TO INTERVENE TO ARRANGE A TEMPORARY CESSION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS TO EVACUATE CIVILIANS AND WOUNDED CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS. ON JANUARY 7 A MESSAGE WAS SENT TO THE ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO AND LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES REQUESTING THEIR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

B. BAC TO CUT SHORT AFRICAN TOUR.

FOREIGN MINISTER VUONG VAN BAC WILL RETURN TO SAIGON SOMEWHAT EARLIER THAN ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED DUE TO THE RECENT UPSURGE IN COMMUNIST-INITIATED MILITARY ACTIVITY. BAC, WHO HAS VISITED THE IVORY COAST, THE GAMBIA, SIERRA LEONE AND, PRESENTLY, MOROCCO, HAD HOPED ALSO TO MAKE STOPS IN LIBERIA, ZAIRE, AND PERHAPS TOGO AND KENYA, BUT WAS REQUESTED BY PRESIDENT THIEU TO HASTEN HIS HOMECOMING. HE WAS TO SPEND THREE DAYS IN RABAT (JAN 7-10) BUT MAY PARE DOWN HIS SCHEDULE TO PERMIT AN EARLY RETURN TO SAIGON.

BAC'S VISIT TO THE GAMBIA (JAN 1-4) WAS REPORTEDLY HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCCESSFUL. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE SIGNED JANUARY 4 FULLY SUPPORTS GVN POSITION, DENOUNCING COMMUNIST CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AND CALLING UPON ALL PARTIES TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FORA SET UP BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT. BAC' THREE-DAY STAY IN SIERRA LEONE, WHICH ENDED JAN 7, WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY AN HOUR-LONG TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LUKE, WHO LATER HOSTED DINNER FOR BAC.

END CONFIDENTIAL

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

III. ECONOMIC

A. BANK CREDIT MEASURES EXPECTED

THE LOCAL PRESS GAVE WIDE COVERAGE THIS WEEK TO PROPOSED CREDIT MEASURES THAT ARE REPORTEDLY AWAITING THE PRIME MINISTER'S FINAL

APPROVAL BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NGUYEN VAN HAO, WHO LAST MONTH STATED HIS DETERMINATION TO EASE CREDIT CONDITIONS, RECENTLY COMPLETED WORK ON A SPECIFIC PACKAGE. GOVERNMENT SOURCES ADVISED MISSION OFFICERS OF THE FOLLOWING

PROPOSED ACTIONS (WHICH MAY FINALLY APPEAR IN A DIFFERENT FORM).

1. BASIC LENDING RATES WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED (THE PRIME RATE IS CURRENTLY ABOUT 25 PERCENT PER ANNUN), BUT LENDING RATES WILL BE REDUCED BY FOUR POINTS FOR SELECTED INDUSTRIES THROUGH THE REDISCOUNT MECHANISM; CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR REDISCOUNT TO BE INCREASED BY VN\$5 BILLION;

2. DIRECT CREDIT CONTROLS WILL BE MODIFIED, EXCEPT THOSE PERTAINING EXPLICITLY TO IMPORTS;

3. A RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM, MOSTLY FOR EXPORTERS BUT ALSO FOR SELECTED SMALL BUSINESSES, WILL BE ESTABLISHED AFTER TET;

4. TREASURY BONDS HELD BY THE BANKS WILL BE FULLY TAXABLE; NO INCREASE IN THE NOMINAL RATE OF INTEREST (CURRENTLY 19 PERCENT ANNUALLY FOR BANK-HELD TREASURY BONDS);

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5. REDISCOUNT FACILITIES WILL BE LIBERALIZED.

6. BANK DEPOSIT RATES WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED.

B. "ONE DOOR" INVESTMENT SERVICE

ANOTHER KEY OBJECTIVE OF DR HAO'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM IS TO RELIEVE ADMINISTRATIVE BOTTLENECKS TO INVESTMENT AND EXPORT. TOWARD THAT END, THE INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IDA) ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK IMPLEMENTATION OF "ONE-DOOR" SERVICE FOR VIETNAMESE INVESTORS.

DIRECTOR NGUYEN DANG KHOI, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED TO IDA AFTER A YEAR AS ASSISTANT MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WILL HAVE OFFICES

AT IDA TO FACILITATE SPEEDY PROCESSING OF INVESTMENT APPLICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS. KHOI ALSO SAID THAT HIS OFFICE WOULD REPRESENT BUSINESSMEN IN FULFILLING OTHER GOVERNMENT FORMALITIES NOT HANDLED DIRECTLY AT IDA.

C. ASSEMBLY COMPLETES 1975 BUDGET ACTION

THE LOWER HOUSE WAS UNABLE LAST WEEK TO GATHER THE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY REQUIRED TO OVERRIDE SENATE REVISIONS OF THE 1975 BUDGET, AND AS A RESULT THE BUDGET HAS GONE TO THE PRESIDENT FOR PROMULGATION.

EARLIER, THE HOUSE HAD CHOPPED VN\$50 BILLION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION'S

VN\$825 BILLION SPENDING PROPOSAL, BUT THE SENATE RESTORED VN\$10 BILLION. (SEE JANUARY 2 MISSION WEEKLY, SAIGON 0041). IF THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT APPROVE THE VN\$785 BILLION BUDGET, HE IS EMPOWERED TO SEND IT BACK TO THE ASSEMBLY FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

D. PRICES EDGE UP

USAID'S CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR SAIGON ADVANCED 0.4 PERCENT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE NEW YEAR. HIGH AND LOW GRADE RICE PRICES WERE UP SLIGHTLY, BUT MEDIUM QUALITY RICE REMAINED STABLE. OTHER IMPORTANT GAINERS WERE FISH, NUOC MAM, LAUNDRY SOAP, AND WOMEN'S SHOES.

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E. GOLD, BLACK MARKET DOLLARS DIP

GOLD QUOTES FELL SHARPLY FROM THEIR END-YEAR HIGH POINT OF \$219.16 PER TROY OUNCE. THE FREE MARKET PRICE WAS \$203.42 ON JANUARY 6 STILL SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THE HONG KONG RATE OF \$182.43. MEANWHILE, US\$100 GREEN BROUGHT VN\$800/US\$1 ON THE BLACK MARKET, A SLIGHT DECLINE FROM VN\$810/\$1 LAST WEEK.

MARTIN

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